

love and to make a difference. He will be greatly missed and remembered forever for his remarkable and inspiring life.

Ann and I are praying for Irene, Helene, Joe Davis, Michael and Lisa Mermelstein, Debbi Mermelstein, Jenna and Mike Fox, Lindsay Davis, Brian Davis, and Eli Fox, and all of David's family and friends. We mourn this very heavy loss, but we are blessed to have known David Mermelstein and for the work he did to educate and improve the world. May his memory be a blessing to all.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-37. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to pass the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 215

Whereas, the National Institutes of Health has reported that the obesity epidemic is now the second-leading cause of death in the United States, with an estimated three hundred thousand deaths per year nationally attributed to the epidemic; and

Whereas, obesity increases the risk for chronic diseases and conditions including high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, arthritis, mental illness, lipid disorders, sleep apnea, and type two diabetes; and

Whereas, over thirty-four percent of rural Americans live with obesity while just under twenty-nine percent of Americans who reside in metropolitan areas live with the condition; and

Whereas, racial and ethnic minority groups have been disproportionately impacted by this epidemic with the highest prevalence of obesity occurring among non-Hispanic blacks (forty-nine and six-tenths percent) followed by Hispanics (forty-four and eight-tenths percent), non-Hispanic whites (forty-two and two-tenths percent), and non-Hispanic Asian adults (seventeen and four-tenths percent); and

Whereas, currently, over one trillion four hundred billion dollars are expended annually on direct and indirect costs for treating health conditions related to obesity; and

Whereas, on average, measured in 2019 dollars, the annual cost of health care for a Medicare beneficiary with obesity is two

thousand eighteen dollars more than the annual cost of health care for a beneficiary of healthy weight; and

Whereas, the overall improvement in public health resulting from coverage for obesity treatments would lead to lower expenditures in emergency room care, ambulatory care, inpatient stays, and prescriptions and is estimated to achieve net savings in healthcare costs of approximately seven thousand dollars per person over ten years; and

Whereas, utilization of obesity treatments are predicted to generate Medicare budget savings of between eighteen billion dollars and twenty-three billion dollars over ten years; and

Whereas, less than one percent of Medicare beneficiaries with obesity are able to access obesity care; and

Whereas, the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021 (TROA) has been introduced as H.R. 1577 and S. 596 in the One Hundred Seventeenth United States Congress; and

Whereas, this legislation is a real opportunity to help adults living with obesity by making targeted therapies and medications more widely available through Medicare; and

Whereas, the Medicare coverage changes proposed by TROA would decrease federal government spending by approximately twenty-five million dollars over the fiscal year 2020 through 2029 budget period; and

Whereas, with cosponsors representing both the Democratic and Republican Parties, TROA enjoys bipartisan support in both the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and Senator Bill Cassidy and Representative Garret Graves of Louisiana are among the cosponsors of this legislation; and

Whereas, organizations that have endorsed TROA include the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Academy of PAs, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, American Council on Excellence, American Gastroenterological Association, American Medical Group Association, American Psychological Association, American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, Black Woman's Health Imperative, Eisai, Endocrine Society, Global Liver Institute, Healthcare Leadership Council, MedTech Coalition for Metabolic Health, National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, Novo Nordisk, Obesity Action Coalition, Obesity Medicine Association, Strategies to Overcome and Prevent Obesity Alliance, The Obesity Society, Trust for America's Health, WW International, and YMCA of the USA; Therefore, be it *Resolved*, that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to pass the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-38. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing its opposition to disproportionately increasing the tax burden on natural gas, oil and fuel industries; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 98

Whereas, the natural gas, oil, and fuel industries contribute significantly to jobs in Louisiana communities and to the development of state of the art emissions reduction technologies; and

Whereas, these industries support nearly eleven million jobs across the country, power the nation's economy, and generate billions in revenue for federal and state governments in rents, royalties, and corporate and income tax payments, including fourteen billion dollars for state treasuries through severance taxes in 2019 alone; and

Whereas, these industries support more than 249,800 jobs in Louisiana and account for more than fourteen and a half billion dollars in wages in the state; and

Whereas, these industries contribute seventy-three billion dollars in gross domestic product for the state; and

Whereas, these industries contributed four and a half billion dollars in direct revenues for Louisiana in 2019, and Louisiana relies on those revenues to fund schools, infrastructure, and other critical social services; and

Whereas, direct industry jobs pay seven times the federal minimum wage and seventy percent higher than the national average wage; and

Whereas, every direct job in natural gas, oil, and fuel industries support an additional 2.7 jobs in affiliated industries, from lodging to restaurants in proximity to these industries' operations; and

Whereas, these industries' investments in this country have led to a fifteen percent decrease in household energy costs over the last decade, while costs for food, education, and healthcare have skyrocketed; and

Whereas, those cheaper energy costs are crucial to working families in our communities and across the country; and

Whereas, the natural gas, oil, and fuel industries should not be prevented from recovering costs that other industries are eligible for simply because they operate in a different economic sector; and

Whereas, the United States tax code allows industries across the manufacturing sector to recover costs related to job creation and other operational investments; and

Whereas, these common tax mechanisms allow natural gas, oil, and fuel industries to create jobs and offset the intangible costs of drilling; invest in our communities; fund critical education, infrastructure, and social service programs; and deliver the energy that working families rely on every day; and therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its opposition to singling out these natural gas, oil, and fuels industries by disproportionately increasing the tax burden on them and the constituents of this state; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the United States, each member of the president's cabinet, each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation, and to the members of the capitol press corps.

POM-39. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of West Virginia urging the United States Congress to extend federal tax incentives to participants in Jumpstart Savings programs that are similar to those that are currently provided to participants in College Savings plans; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 24

Whereas, The economy of the United States is experiencing increased demands for highly trained, skilled tradespeople to fill jobs in the construction, welding, and other vocational sectors; and

Whereas, In the United States, there are nearly half a million more jobs available in the skilled trades than workers with the skills to fill them; and

Whereas, The number of available jobs in the skilled trades is anticipated to rise to two million over the next decade; and

Whereas, A traditional college education is one path to success, but not the only path, especially in light of the increasing costs of a traditional four-year college degree and the growing demand for skilled labor; and

Whereas, Encouraging students and their families to invest in alternative forms of postsecondary skills could help reshape our nation's future workforce; and

Whereas, Providing the next generation the ability to save money for the future costs of tools, equipment, and business expenses will make it easier to enter a vocation, trade, or start a small business in the skilled trades industry; and

Whereas, The West Virginia Legislature has adopted legislation authorizing the West Virginia Jumpstart Savings Program, which creates several tax incentives to help program participants save money, by allowing an income tax deduction for contributions to a Jumpstart Savings account, by providing businesses with a non-refundable state tax credit for matching an employee's own contribution to his or her account each year; and

Whereas, The Jumpstart Savings Program will allow individuals to roll 529 College Savings plan funds over to a Jumpstart Savings account without facing state income tax penalties; and

Whereas, West Virginia's Jumpstart Savings Program could be a model for other states to invest in the future entrepreneurship and small business trade industries in our nation, and Congress should extend federal tax benefits to such programs; Therefore be it *Resolved by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

That Congress is urged to provide tax benefits to participants in Jumpstart Savings programs that are similar to those currently provided to participants in College Savings plans pursuant to 26 U.S.C. §529; and be it further

Resolved, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates is hereby directed to forward a copy of this resolution, along with a copy of the Jumpstart Savings Act, to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to members of West Virginia's congressional delegation.

POM-40. A resolution adopted by the Senate of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to enact the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA); to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 245

Whereas, the National Institutes of Health has reported that obesity is now the second leading cause of death nationally, with an estimated three hundred thousand deaths a year attributed to the epidemic; and

Whereas, obesity increases the risk for chronic diseases and conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, arthritis, mental illness, lipid disorders, sleep apnea, and type 2 diabetes; and

Whereas, 34.2% of rural Americans live with obesity compared to 28.7% of those who live in metropolitan areas; and

Whereas, racial and ethnic minority groups have been disproportionately impacted, with the highest prevalence of obesity among non-Hispanic blacks (49.6%), followed by Hispanics (44.8%) and non-Hispanic whites (42.2%), and non-Hispanic Asian adults (17.4%); and

Whereas, currently, \$1.42 trillion is spent each year on direct and indirect costs for health conditions related to obesity; and

Whereas, on average in 2019, a Medicare beneficiary with obesity cost two thousand eighteen dollars more than a healthy-weight beneficiary; and

Whereas, overall improvement in health conditions from covered obesity treatments would lead to lower expenditures in emergency room care, ambulatory care, inpatient stays, and prescriptions, resulting in net savings between six thousand seven hundred dollars and seven thousand one hundred dollars over ten years per person; and

Whereas, utilization of obesity treatments will generate Medicare budget savings between eighteen and twenty-three billion dollars over ten years; and

Whereas, less than one percent of Medicare beneficiaries with obesity are able to access obesity care; and

Whereas, the proposed Medicare coverage changes would decrease federal government spending by approximately twenty-five million dollars over the fiscal years 2020-2029 budget window; and

Whereas, the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA) authored by Louisiana United States Senator BILL CASSIDY is a real opportunity to help adults living with obesity by making targeted therapies and medications more widely available through Medicare; and Whereas, the TROA legislation enjoys bipartisan support, being co-sponsored by five Republicans in the United States Senate and five Democrats in the United States Senate; and

Whereas, the following organizations have endorsed TROA: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Academy of PAs, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, American Council on Excellence, American Gastroenterological Association, American Medical Group Association, American Psychological Association, American Society for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery, Black Woman's Health Imperative, Eisai, Endocrine Society, Global Liver Institute, Healthcare Leadership Council, MedTech Coalition for Metabolic Health, National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, Novo Nordisk, Obesity Action Coalition, Obesity Medicine Association, SECA, Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance, The Obesity Society, Trust for America's Health, WW International, and YMCA of the USA; Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA); and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate, the clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

POM-41. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to pass the ABLE Age Adjustment Act; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 99

Whereas, the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act, also known as the ABLE Act, was passed by Congress and subsequently signed into law in 2014; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act has created tax-advantaged savings accounts known as "ABLE accounts" for persons with disabilities and has allowed funds to be withdrawn from the accounts to cover costs of health care, employment support, housing, transportation, assistive technology, and lifelong education for those persons; and

Whereas, ABLE accounts are subject to the same tax treatment as the popular education savings accounts commonly called "529 plans"; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act has created a powerful incentive for individuals and families to save private funds for the purpose of supporting persons with disabilities in maintaining health, independence, and quality of life; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act, as enacted, stipulates that funds held in an ABLE account do not count toward any maximum limit on a person's assets upon which eligibility for a means-tested federal program may be contingent; and

Whereas, savings in an ABLE account do not jeopardize a person's eligibility for programs such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income; and

Whereas, the asset limits of such programs had previously forced low-income persons into the difficult decision of whether to spend their limited resources, down to two thousand dollars in most cases, in order to become eligible for needed assistance; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act, as enacted, includes a fiscal safeguard for states by providing that if the ABLE account beneficiary dies or his disability ceases and assets remain in the account, the assets will first be distributed to any state Medicaid plan that provided assistance to the person; and

Whereas, as evidenced by the party affiliations of its seventy-eight original cosponsors being almost perfectly balanced, the ABLE Act legislation enjoys broad bipartisan support; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act embodies sound economic policy by encouraging savings and asset building; and

Whereas, the ABLE Act promotes important values that our nation holds dear by providing that every citizen living with a disability has the opportunity to attain independence and an improved quality of life; and

Whereas, prior to its passing, a limitation was added to the ABLE Act, which limits the benefits to persons who had the onset of disability before the age of twenty-six; and

Whereas, this age limitation has prevented many persons and families from receiving the many benefits of the ABLE Act; and

Whereas, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act has been introduced as S. 331 and H.R. 1219 in the One Hundred Seventeenth United States Congress; and

Whereas, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act would make the provisions of the ABLE Act available to persons who had the onset of disability before the age of forty-six; and

Whereas, if passed, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act would make six million more persons with disabilities eligible for ABLE accounts; and

Whereas, if passed, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act would also help states keep administrative costs for the state ABLE programs low; and

Whereas, as evidenced by the party affiliations of its sixty-five cosponsors, the ABLE Age Adjustment Act has broad bipartisan support; Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to pass the ABLE Age Adjustment Act; be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-42. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to support H.R. 82 of the 117th Congress, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2021, and all other

similar legislation and to take such actions as are necessary to review and eliminate all provisions of federal law which reduce Social Security benefits for those receiving pension benefits from federal, state, or local government retirement or pension systems, plans, or funds; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 7

Whereas, the Congress of the United States of America has enacted both the Government Pension Offset (GPO), reducing the spousal and survivor Social Security benefit, and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), reducing the earned Social Security benefits payable to any person who also receives a public pension benefit; and

Whereas, the GPO negatively affects a spouse or survivor receiving a federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit who would also be entitled to a Social Security benefit earned by a spouse; and

Whereas, the GPO formula reduces the spousal or survivor Social Security benefit by two-thirds of the amount of the federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit received by the spouse or survivor, in many cases completely eliminating the Social Security benefit even though their spouses paid Social Security taxes for many years; and

Whereas, the GPO has a harsh effect on hundreds of thousands of citizens and undermines the original purpose of the Social Security dependent/survivor benefit; and

Whereas, according to recent Social Security Administration figures, more than half a million individuals nationally are affected by the GPO; and

Whereas, the WEP applies to those persons who have earned federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefits, in addition to working in employment covered under Social Security and paying into the Social Security system; and

Whereas, the WEP reduces the earned Social Security benefit using an averaged indexed monthly earnings formula and may reduce Social Security benefits for affected persons by as much as one-half of the retirement benefit earned as a public servant in employment not covered under Social Security; and

Whereas, the WEP causes hardworking individuals to lose a significant portion of the Social Security benefits that they earn themselves; and

Whereas, according to recent Social Security Administration figures, more than one and a half million individuals nationally are affected by the WEP; and

Whereas, in certain circumstances, both the WEP and the GPO can be applied to a qualifying survivor's benefit, each independently reducing the available benefit and in combination eliminating a large portion of the total Social Security benefit available to the survivor; and

Whereas, because of the calculation characteristics of the GPO and the WEP, they have a disproportionately negative effect on employees working in lower-wage government jobs, like policemen, firefighters, teachers, and state employees; and

Whereas, Louisiana is making every effort to improve the quality of life of its citizens and to encourage them to live here lifelong, yet the current GPO and WEP provisions compromise their quality of life; and

Whereas, the number of people affected by GPO and WEP is growing every day as more and more people reach retirement age; and

Whereas, individuals drastically affected by the GPO or WEP may have no choice but to return to work after retirement in order to make ends meet, but the earnings accumulated during this return to work can further reduce the Social Security benefits the individual is entitled to; and

Whereas, the GPO and WEP are established in federal law, and repeal of the GPO and the WEP can only be enacted by congress: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take all such actions as are necessary to review the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision Social Security benefit reductions and to eliminate or reduce them by supporting H.R. 82 of the 117th Congress, the Social Security Fairness Act and all similar purposed legislation; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation and the president of the United States.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 517. A bill to provide for joint reports by relevant Federal agencies to Congress regarding incidents of terrorism, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117-31).

S. 1917. A bill to establish a K-12 education cybersecurity initiative, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 117-32).

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Ms. STABENOW for the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

*Jennifer Lester Moffitt, of California, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Regulatory Programs.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. TOOMEY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. YOUNG):

S. 2466. A bill to reform the Federal sugar program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CASSIDY:

S. 2467. A bill to provide for a Public Health Emergency Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 2468. A bill to amend the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 to extend the moratorium on drilling off the coasts of the States of Florida, Georgia, and South Caro-

lina, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BRAUN (for himself and Ms. ERNST):

S. 2469. A bill establishing appropriate thresholds for certain budget points of order in the Senate, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 2470. A bill to prohibit Federal funding for educational agencies and schools whose students do not read certain foundational texts of the United States and are not able to recite those texts or that teach that those texts are products of white supremacy or racism; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2471. A bill to establish a community disaster assistance fund for housing and community development and to authorize the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to provide, from the fund, assistance through a community development block grant disaster recovery program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2472. A bill to prohibit the non-consensual release of claims by States, municipalities, federally recognized Tribes, or the United States against non-debtors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Mr. KING):

S. 2473. A bill to provide grants for the construction, improvement, and acquisition of middle mile infrastructure; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2474. A bill to prohibit the use of funds made available under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to purchase communications equipment or services that pose a national security risk; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. Res. 318. A resolution expressing support for the designation of July 2021 as "American Grown Flower and Foliage Month"; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. Res. 319. A resolution expressing support for the designation of July 2021 as "National Sarcoma Awareness Month"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BLUNT):

S. Res. 320. A resolution authorizing the taking of a photograph in the Senate Chamber; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 67

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 67, a bill to support efforts by